

NewsTrain Host Guide 2017

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a host for a NewsTrain workshop. The goal of NewsTrain is to provide affordable, high-quality, relevant training to journalists, journalism students and journalism educators in your area. NewsTrain staffers work closely with host committees to identify training needs, a workshop agenda and trainers to meet those needs, and a workshop setting and presentations for effective programs. Planning and preparation are essential steps in staging a successful NewsTrain.

This guide is designed to help host committees plan and present a great workshop. The guide outlines key steps, responsibilities, questions that need to be answered, and planning considerations that will determine the success of your NewsTrain workshop. In addition to this guide, you will receive a detailed back-out schedule that can be used to assign tasks among host committee members.

Each NewsTrain is unique, as needs and personalities change from one location to another. The constant from one workshop to the next is a thorough planning process. All questions and concerns – at any time in the process – are welcome.

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NewsTrain workshops at a glance

NewsTrain provides:

- Development of the program and payment of high-quality trainers for a one- or two-day regional workshop
- National promotion of the workshop
- Registration system on the APME website, apme.com
- Planning tools for the host committee
- Folders for the handouts
- Start-to-finish planning and logistics support

Host committees provide:

- Two classrooms equipped with audio/visual equipment (LCD projector, screen, speakers, microphones, remote slide advancer, laptop), electrical outlets and tables or desks for laptops, and WiFi access for trainers and attendees. One classroom should accommodate at least 100, and the other should hold at least 50.
- Food, including Continental breakfast, box lunch, snacks, water and coffee

- Name tags and on-site signage
- Negotiation of a discounted rate for attendees at a hotel near the workshop site. This rate should require no financial commitment from the committee or APME.
- Copying of handouts
- Administrative help during planning and presentation of the workshop
- Regional promotion of the workshop and recruitment of participants
- Management of workshop logistics at the venue

Host-committee workshop costs:

Host committees should budget \$3,000 for food for a two-day workshop and half that for a one-day workshop, plus copying and any venue and regional marketing costs. Host committees should seek local sponsors to cover those costs.

NewsTrain step-by-step

Step 1: Form a host committee

Host committees consist of 6-10 representatives from local news organizations, journalism associations, college journalism schools, or other groups who expect their members to attend NewsTrain. Given NewsTrain is sponsored by the Associated Press Media Editors, a host committee should include your local, state, or regional AP bureau chief.

The host committee should have a chair who monitors the work of the committee, seeing that planning deadlines are met, and serving as the key liaison with NewsTrain staff.

NewsTrain is intended to be a regional workshop. The size of the region can vary, from one state to several states. The goal is to attract 100 attendees to a NewsTrain workshop. So a host committee should encompass enough groups and area to attract that size audience. Host committee member organizations should each commit to send a block of attendees to NewsTrain.

Successful host committees in recent years have been comprised of newspapers (big and small), regional press or APME associations, and local university/college journalism schools. In many cases, the journalism school can provide a well-equipped setting at minimal cost, reducing the budget pressures for the host committee. School participation on the host committee can also encourage student and faculty attendance; in 2015, 31 percent of NewsTrain attendees were either journalism students or professors.

Step 2: Select date and site

The host committee's first decision is to select a length (one day or two), potential date and location for the workshop. A one-day workshop usually consists of about five sessions; a two-day workshop can address nine topics. The greater breadth of a two-day workshop must be weighed against the time commitment and additional hotel costs that a two-day workshop requires. Selecting the right date includes considerations of competing events, seasonal conflicts (e.g. holidays, football games), likely weather and other factors that could make it harder for people to attend. In recent years, NewsTrains have often been two-day events spanning a Friday and Saturday.

Selecting the right location includes considerations of room size, room number, costs, and amenities. (e.g., If it's a two-day workshop, can one room hold 100 people and another hold at least 50? Can people in the region reach the location with no more than a few hours of driving? Does the facility have projection equipment, Internet access, space for food service and registration? Can a host committee member provide a setting for free, or will there be rental costs?)

In recent years, many host committees have included a university journalism program, and workshops have been held in university classrooms. University settings offer modern A/V equipment and space for food service and registration. University classrooms are often more available to outside groups on Friday and Saturday, when few or no classes are held.

Step 3: Develop a budget

A central part of the NewsTrain model is to provide affordable training opportunities. The early-bird registration fee for a workshop, whether one-day or two-day, is \$75. Registrants within the last month before a workshop pay \$85. The registration fee is retained by APME. Because the registration fee is already heavily discounted, **APME does not further discount registrations for students or comp registrations for anyone.**

Host-committee costs for a two-day workshop typically include:

- two lunches, two Continental breakfasts, four coffee/snack/water breaks;
- possible rental for a venue and/or A/V equipment if a free university setting is not used;
- copying costs for handouts;
- any regional marketing costs;
- name tags and any on-site signage.

Host committees should budget \$3,000 for food costs for a two-day workshop and half that for a one-day workshop, plus copying and any venue, regional marketing and other costs.

Host committees are advised to approach local news organizations, press and broadcast associations and other donors to help sponsor their NewsTrain workshop.

Step 4: Conduct a training-needs assessment

A key to developing a successful NewsTrain program is to identify training needs shared among members of the host committee. The NewsTrain project director provides a worksheet and can help facilitate a discussion among committee members on training needs. Training needs are usually framed by discussing these four questions:

- 1. What problems or challenges in your organization could training help solve?*
- 2. What new skills could training help develop among your staff?*
- 3. If the training were successful, what outcomes or results would you expect to see?*
- 4. What would you like staff members to be able to DO after the training? What behaviors would you like to see them exhibit?*

It is important that each member of the host committee participate so that the NewsTrain workshop will be of interest and value to all their respective members. The chair is responsible for completing the training-needs assessment with the committee and discussing the results with the NewsTrain project director.

Step 5: Hold the planning meeting

Based on the results of the training-needs assessment, the NewsTrain project director will develop workshop proposals, with specific topics and potential speakers. The host committee chair will take these proposals to the host committee and get back to the project director with feedback. Usually, after several conversations, the final agenda with topics and trainers will be set.

As indicated on the back-out schedule, efforts by the host committee now kick into high gear, with regional promotion and recruitment of participants and planning for food and workshop logistics taking priority.

Step 6: Promotion and registration

NewsTrain will conduct national promotion of the workshop. This includes notices through The AP, APME, and the NewsTrain and APME Facebook and Twitter accounts.

The most effective promotion and recruiting are in the hands of members of the host committee, as their constituents are the target audience. Promotion should include internal communications appropriate to each host committee

organization, including fliers, email blasts and personal phone calls to other news leaders. Please see [this folder](#) for a simple template, photos and logo to create a flier, if needed.

Typically, promotion may begin early in the process with a simple “save the date” notice to alert people in the region that a NewsTrain workshop is coming on a certain date. As plans develop, additional promotion should focus on the workshop agenda, speakers, low cost, or other factors of interest to potential attendees and organizations.

“The main advice I would have is to create the widest possible list of potential attendees and be relentless,” said Sue Bullard, host committee chair for the 2016 Lincoln, Nebraska, NewsTrain, which attracted 112 registrants.

Registration for a NewsTrain workshop is conducted online on the NewsTrain portion of the APME website (apme.com). Workshop participants are expected to pay when they register. NewsTrain staff can also help editors or other host committee leaders with group registrations.

Step 7: Food and site set-up

As the NewsTrain workshop approaches, arrangements for food and facilities should be completed. As part of the planning process, NewsTrain staff will survey speakers and provide a memo on room set-up and A/V requirements. A/V requirements generally include a laptop, a good LCD projector and screen, WiFi Internet access for trainer and attendees, flip charts or whiteboard, and a wireless microphone, speakers to project sound, and a remote slide advancer for each room. Attendees appreciate desk or table tops for their laptops and adequate electrical outlets.

A few weeks prior to the workshop, the NewsTrain project director and host committee chair and a venue representative will hold a final planning conference call to check on the status of all planning arrangements. This conversation will include staffing needs and assignments for the workshop.

Registrations are closely monitored in the final weeks leading up to the workshop. If attendance is falling short, efforts should be made by the host committee to recruit more participants. If attendance reaches the projected limit, the registration is closed to prevent crowding.

The NewsTrain project director will arrive the day before the workshop to conduct a workshop-site walk-through and an A/V check with a venue representative. NewsTrain Program Assistant Beth Grace will ship a box containing all the folders for participants to the person designated by the host committee. NewsTrain staff also posts the handouts and slides online before the workshop at <http://slideshare.net/newstrain>. The host committee is responsible

for copying the handouts and having them delivered to the workshop site. The trainers will hand them out at each session.

Step 8: NewsTrain workshop

During the workshop, the NewsTrain project director will oversee all aspects of the workshop to ensure everything unfolds as planned and that all who attend enjoy an effective and enjoyable training event.

The host committee (as will be discussed in the phone conference mentioned in Step 7) will provide several people to help staff a registration table, help monitor different rooms, coordinate A/V needs, work with food services, and otherwise help the workshop run smoothly.

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